

## Words

Don't get me wrong,  
some of my best friends  
are words,  
especially my own.  
There are more of them about

than there used to be:  
they stick to your face  
and drop to the ground  
with odd numbers of legs  
protesting at the air.

They don't string together  
on the page and stay there:  
like birds on the wire  
they abandon you, autumn  
can come any time.

There's no knowing whither  
they'll be bound: perhaps  
to the forgotten crossroads  
where an adult's words  
manhandled you aside

as you tried  
to describe the thunder.  
There's no ceiling to belief  
in their power: what they say  
goes before they wither.

There is so much hurt in words,  
there are not enough  
eyes in the world  
to flinch from it,  
those eyes lit up

that are looking hungrily  
for words to do justice to them.  
The words are greater in number  
than the maggot or the starling,  
than the sum of meaning.

Friends tell me, sit and listen  
to what's there where none  
penetrate, but they do,  
through cracks and keyholes  
and channelled down the wind

in the grass where I lie.

It's a wise man  
who can turn away from them.  
Even as I look up  
the clouds are heavy with little ones.

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